THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) The Government has taken various measures to make up the short fall during the recent years. A committee headed by Shri Rakesh Mohan was appointed to review Indian shipping and recommend measures for its revival. The modalities for introduction of Tonnage Tax are being discussed with the Finance Ministry and a sub-committee comprising six members, two members each from Ministry of Shipping, Central Board of Direct Taxes and Indian National Shipowners' Association has been formed to finalize the modalities of the poposed fiscal regime and try to structure the required legislation regarding Tonnage Tax. The sub-committee is having its meetings at frequent intervals to give final shape to the draft legislation on Introduction of Tonnage Tax.

(ii) In the Finance Act, 2002, scope of Section 33AC was enlarged to twice the aggregate amount of the paid-up share capital, general reserves and the amount credited to share premium account.

(c) No, Sir. Only the over aged vessels, which may also include bigger vessels are scrapped from the fleet.

Transit accommodation for ship passengers at Kolkata

2343. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andaman and Nicobar administration has decided to provide transit accommodation at Kolkata for ship passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the amount spent thereon;

(c) whether it is a fact that after incurring expenditure, the department is examining the possibility of shifting operations from Kolkata to Haldia and;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the justification for making such unfruitful expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

3291 Sq. mtr. land by the side of Coal Dock Road, in Kolkata was taken by the A&N Administration on lease in two phases (3180 sq. mtrs. by March, 1993 and 111 sq. mtrs. in July, 1998). It was proposed by the A&N Administration to construct a multi-storeyed transit accommodation having total plinth area of 4940 sq. mtrs. In the first phase it was proposed to construct 2031 sq. mtrs.

Total amount spent so far (upto 11/2002) is Rs. 2,44,72,090/- which includes lease rent, cost of construction of boundary wall and payment towards arbitration.

(c) and (d) The feasibility of operating at least one passenger vessel from Haldia is being examined by A&N Administration on the grounds that it will reduce journey by 15.00 hours, where sailing will not depend on tide cycle and it may reduce costs etc. Transit accommodation is required to be maintained at the Coal Dock Road site, as it will continue to remain the main hub of the shipping activity for these islands.

Vallarpadam Container Terminal project in Kochi

2344. DR. A.R. KIDWAI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has sent a proposal to the Planning Commission seeking support for carrying out dredging work and port and railway connectivity for the proposed Rs. 2,118 crore Vallarpadam Container Terminal at Kochi;

(b) if so, whether the Planning Commission has agreed to provide the necessary assistance;

(c) if so, to what extent the aid has been given for implementing this project; and

(d) by when, this project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) to (d) Cochin Port Trust has drawn up an Integrated Development Plan for the port which, *inter-alia*, includes the construction and operation of an International Container Transhipment Terminal (ICTT) at Vallarpadam, capital dredging